



U.S. Forest Service Briefing Paper

Date: August 15, 2014

Topic: Forest Service Programs and Actions Underway that are consistent with Good Neighbor Environmental Board Recommendation #1.

Issue: The Coronado National Forest is adjacent to the U.S./Mexico border

Key Points:

- **All U.S. federal agencies working in the U.S.-Mexico border region should increase interagency collaboration regarding ecological restoration and by June 2014 should draft a blueprint for action, including goals, metrics and protocols for achieving short-, medium- and long-term progress**

The Coronado National Forest (NF) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have a multi-year agreement that allows the Forest to use CBP funds to commit more equipment and personnel more quickly to address CBP maintenance, upgrade and coordination requests of Forest roads and trails. Maintenance and repair of existing roads is now underway along the Arizona border through a programmatic effort known Tactical Infrastructure Maintenance and Repair (TIMR). The funds are used to better relocate travel routes used by CBP out of riparian areas and onto more sustainable routes. Monitoring of off road incursions and study of these impacts is also underway. Three of the Coronado NF border districts are collaborating with CBP to identify needed travel routes in conjunction with the development of Motor Vehicle Use Maps for travel management planning. This effort identifies the designated, legal road system for public use on the forest.

The Coronado National Forest proposed a collaborative effort to work with CBP on developing an agreement to pursue mutual fuels treatment objectives on National Forest System lands in the border region.

The current working proposal is to treat approximately 20,000 -25,000 acres of madrean oak savannas. Treatment costs are estimated to be greater than \$150 - \$200 per acre. Treatments are already authorized through previous NEPA analysis.

To be successful, subsequent maintenance will be needed following initial treatments, requiring additional funding in future years. Maintenance costs should be significantly less than initial treatments. Objectives include increasing Border Patrol surveillance effectiveness along the border and along high use corridors, promoting higher rates of detection and apprehension in these areas, and reducing the potential for smuggling along and through private lands. Additional objectives include promoting ecological restoration of the madrean oak savannas, resulting in less intense wildfires and more drought resistant vegetation communities, as well as creating defensible space adjacent to private lands.

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